availability of products at reasonable prices through compulsory licensing. Many of the drugs already in the Indian market, including those in the National List of Essential Medicines 2003, are off-patent and their pricing and availability would not get affected by the new patent regime.

Decline in Applications for Ration Cards

518. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a massive decline in the number of applications received for renewal of ration cards in the capital;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that PDS has lost its relevance;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether ration cards have become redundant as identity/ residential proof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Delhi has migratory population and perhaps the cardholders did not apply, as they have migrated/shifted out of Delhi. It has eliminated bogus cards. Under APL categories only wheat @ Rs. 6.80 per kg. and rice @ Rs. 9.00 per kg. is provided and foodgrains of the same quality are available at a slightly higher rate in the open market as such people don't feel the need to renew their APL ration cards.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) As per the PDS (Control) Order, 2001, Ration cards shall not be used as documents of identity.

Irregularities in TPDS in Punjab and Bihar

†519. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the report submitted by 'Project Evaluation Organisation' set-up by Planning Commission in which it has been stated that Punjab and Bihar are the States where maximum irregularities take place in the supply of foodgrains to be provided to poor families under Targeted Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the elaborate details of the report in this regard;

(c) the percentage of targeted people in Bihar and Punjab being benefited from the scheme of Government; and

(d) whether Government have considered any alternative arrangement keeping in view the present scenario?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) of the Planning Commission has conducted evaluation study on TPDS in which the primary data collected from the field pertained to the year 2001. As per the findings of the study there is abnormal leakage and diversion of the foodgrains for the BPL (i.e. more than 75%) in the States of Bihar and Punjab. The leakage at Fair Price Shops (FPS) level in these two States is more than 50%.

(c) Under the Targeted Public Distribution System the estimated number of families are based on the poverty estimates of Planning Commission (1993-94) and population projection of the Registrar General of India as on 01-03-2000. The estimated number of BPL families (including Antyodaya families) under TPDS in respect of Bihar and Punjab are 65.23 lakh and 4.68 lakh respectively. The number of BPL (including AAY) ration cards issued by the State Governments of Bihar and Punjab are 71.64 lakh and 7.14 lakh respectively.

(d) The PDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central Government and the State Governments. While the Central Government is responsible for procurement of foodgrains, their storage and transportation upto the principal distribution centers of the Food Corporation of India, the responsiblity for identification of BPL families, issue of ration cards and distribution of foodgrains through the vast network of fair price shops all over India rests with the State Governments.

Streamlining of PDS is an ongoing process. Recently all the State

† Orginal notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Governments have been instructed to constitute vigilance committees and involve Panchayati Raj Institutions for transparent and effective implementation of PDS.

Shortage of foodgrain stock

†520. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the total stock of foodgrains from agricultural yield in the country during 2002-03 alongwith the quantity of foodgrains that should have been in the stock for maintaining balance in the Indian market;

(b) the quantity of foodgrain stock during 2005;

(c)the foodgrain stock required to keep hold on Indian market and to what extent it is short;

(d) the reasons for shortfall in foodgrain stock and whether Government would also import to meet this shortage; and

(e) if so, the quantum thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The total production of foodgrains in the country during 2002-03 was 1747.7 lakh tonnes which includes 718.2 lakh tonnes of Rice and 657.6 lakh tonnes of Wheat. The total stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool as on 1.7.2002 was 630.47 lakh tonnes as against the buffer norm of 243 lakh tonnes on that date.

(b) and (c) The stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool on 1.7.2005 was 251.13 lakh tonnes as against the buffer norm of 269.00 lakh tonnes on that date.

(d) and (e) The reasons for shortfall in stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool are:-

(i) Increase in offtake of foodgrains under Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Welfare Schemes.

(ii) Shortfall in procurement of wheat mainly from Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

The stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool are however sufficient to meet the requirement, under Targetted Public Distribution System and Welfare Schemes. There is therefore no need at present to import any foodgrains.

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.